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Escaped Housewife Takes Work as Team Mascot

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ESCAPED HOUSEWIFE
TAKES WORK AS TEAM MASCOT

This isn't like her. Exile
is about making yourself small,
blending in. She should be seated
in Section J, wagging an index finger
at the hog dog vendor, keeping stats
on the back of her program.
She has run away to disappear
yet on Sundays after double-headers
she is the center of attention, circling
the bases, a hundred children in tow.

She dances on the dugout roof
with exaggerated steps, slaps
each huge yellow foot, heel
to toe, against the concrete.
Sometimes words come unbidden
to her arms and she spells them
for the crowd, which crows
each letter back to her.
Hers are unlikely cheers.
So much for forever, they chant,
their fists pumping the air.

What kind of bird
is six feet tall, has plumage
the color of a house on fire,
makes no noise but communicates
through gestures, arms as frantic
as a woman drowning, legs thin
and white as weathered bones?

The stadium is a cold nest.
It is her job to warm it,
to meet the open mouths
with something like comfort.
So on kazoo night she sings.
She shoves the toy deep
inside the abyss of her beak
and cuts loose, wails her plastic blues.
By the seventh inning she's convinced
the crowd, which joins her as one brood,
not caring if they ever get back.